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The far West of Southeast Asia - 'give' and 'get' in the languages of Myanmar

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Abstract: Treatments of the Southeast Asian linguistic area are usually restricted to the Mainland area roughly covering present day Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, with southwestern and southern China, as well as the peninsular and insular regions seen as partly belonging to the area (e.g. Bisang 1992; Enfield 2005). Modern Myanmar, i.e. the region from the Salween to the Irrawaddy and Chindwin valleys, is not usually covered in studies of Southeast Asia, or treated as marginal or transit area. This may have different reasons, including the dearth of reliable data from this region, and the surface structure of verb-final Tibeto-Burman languages dominant in the area, which is superficially radically different from the verb-medial languages of core Southeast Asia. The languages of Myanmar indeed seem to have more in common with languages of northeast India. On the other hand, languages such as verb-medial Mon, Palaung and Shan basically are well integrated in the SEA area, while at the same time sharing many features with their neighboring languages. With intensive language contact for several centuries, it is not surprising that also Tibeto-Burman languages of the region show similarities with languages of SEA. Karenic varieties, which changed from verb-final to verb-medial, are probably only most extreme outcome of this contact, but smaller scale contact phenomena can be observed in many places. Based on published sources and original material collected during numerous field trips to Myanmar over the past more than ten years, the present study looks at the presence and absence of a number of common features of SEA languages (Comrie 2007; Enfield 2005) in a sample of languages spoken in present-day Myanmar. The main languages used in this study are Burmese varieties, Mon, and Shan, representing the three major language families of the area, namely Tibeto-Burman, Austroasiatic, and Tai-Kadai, respectively. Additional data will be adduced from Karenic languages, as well as other languages where data are available and relevant to the argument. One of the striking features of Southeast Asian languages is the grammatical use of verbs, usually called serial verbs or secondary verbs (V2). These V2s range in function from modal to directional and aspectual, and also express secondary concepts such as manner, attitude, and more. Very often these V2s are difficult, if not impossible, to catch in traditional grammatical terms. One case in point is the verb 'get', which occurs in either pre-verbal or post-verbal position in many languages of SEA, with different functions. Post-verbal 'get' usually expresses general ability or the absence of obstacles, while in pre-verbal position it indicates that an event occurs because of some prior event (see Enfield 2003), often translated as 'get to' or 'have a chance to', or analyzed as past tense. This second function seems to be closely related to the use of (mostly pre-verbal) 'give' to express permissive and/or jussive causative function, present in the majority of languages of SEA and spreading into Myanmar. In verb-final Burmese, where auxiliaries are commonly placed after the main verb, 'get' occurs only post-verbally, though with different syntactic behavior for the meanings 'can, be able' and 'have to, get to; have done'. The former, corresponding to SEA post-verbal 'get' is a free auxiliary, the latter, which corresponds to SEA pre-verbal 'get' is a bound morpheme (see Jenny 2009). This example shows that the similarity of expression is often hidden behind differences in syntax, especially in languages with diverging basic word order. The aim of this study is to show to what extent Burmese, including its dialects, and other languages of Myanmar are part of the SEA linguistic area, thereby extending the notion of SEA to the northwest, beyond the Salween. References: Bisang, W. 1992. *Das Verb im Chinesischen, Hmong, Vietnamesischen, Thai und Khmer*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr. Comrie, B. 2007. Areal typology of Mainland Southeast Asia: what we learn from the WALS maps. *Manusya: Journal of Humanities*. Special issue no. 13, 18-47. Enfield, N. J. 2003. *Linguistic epidemiology. Semantics and grammar of language contact in mainland Southeast Asia*. London and New York: Routledge Curzon. Enfield, N. J. 2005. Areal linguistics and Mainland Southeast Asia. *The Annual Review of Anthropology* 34:181-206. Jenny, Mathias. 2009. Modality in Burmese: 'may' or 'must' - grammatical uses of *yá* 'get'. In *JSEALS* 1, 111-126.

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1. Introduction

Southeast Asia has been established as a linguistic area at least since Henderson (1965) and has received a fair amount of interest by linguists, as can be seen in the regular appearance of publications devoted to the field. Despite the fact that there are a number of specific areal studies in Southeast Asian languages, general typological overviews of the area are still rare. Specific studies on Southeast Asia include Henderson (1965) on phonology and morphology, Matisoff (2004) on semantics, Clark (1989) on syntax, and Bisang (1992) and Enfield (2003) on grammaticalization paths of verbs. Paper-length general overviews of linguistic features of the languages of Southeast Asia are Comrie (2007) and Enfield (2005). One common trait of almost all studies of Southeast Asian languages is that they do not include the languages of Myanmar (Henderson 1965 being a rare exception here). This exclusion of the western fringes of Southeast Asia may be attributed to a number of reasons. On the practical side, most of the languages of present-day Myanmar are not (yet) well described, and field research in the area has been difficult or impossible for over 40 years. Also, the material that is available, especially on the Tibeto-Burman languages (apart from Karenic varieties) suggests a rather different typological profile from the one found further to the east. The general verb-final clause structure of the Tibeto-Burman languages stands in contrast with the predominantly verb-medial structure of what can be called “core mainland Southeast Asia”, comprising languages belonging mainly to the Austroasiatic, Tai-Kadai, Hmong-Mien, and Austronesian families. The best known languages of Myanmar are thus superficially closer to the languages of South Asia, which lead Masica (1976:183) to including Burmese as a (peripheral) member of the South Asian sprachbund, stating that there is “a profound hiatus between India and Southeast Asia beyond Burma”. In a recent study, Vittrant (2011) asks whether Burmese is linguistically part of (mainland) Southeast Asia. As Masica (1976), Vittrant (2011) looks only at Burmese, leaving aside the other languages spoken in present day Myanmar. Unlike Masica (1976), Vittrant (2011) concludes that Burmese shares enough features with Southeast Asian languages to be included in this linguistic area.

In the present study I look at two widespread constructions in Southeast Asian languages in a number of languages of Myanmar, including Burmese and ethnic languages belonging to three different families. The constructions under investigation are the grammatical functions of the verbs ‘give’ and ‘get’, the latter of which has been described and analyzed in detail by Enfield (2003). The main focus is on the (core Southeast Asian) preverbal functions of these two verbs, which are ‘permissive/jussive causative’ and what Enfield (2003) describes as ‘result of prior event’ respectively. In postverbal position, the functions are ‘benefactive’ and ‘possibility/ability’ respectively. As argued in Jenny (2009) for the case of ‘get’, I take the preverbal and postverbal functions as independent grammatical developments, rather than different stages of a

single linear development, as argued by Haiman (1999) for Khmer. The grammatical use of ‘give’ and ‘get’, though a solid feature of Southeast Asian languages, is not restricted to this area. Parallel constructions are found in many languages of Myanmar and all the way through Northeast India up to Nepal. In accordance with the different syntactic structure of the languages west of mainland Southeast Asia, the respective constructions may appear in forms seemingly radically different from what has been described in Southeast Asian languages, but the underlying semantics exhibit close parallels, certainly enough to identify and compare the expressions across the boundaries of syntactic differences.

The areas of grammatical uses of ‘give’ and ‘get’ are not completely coextensive, with ‘get’ apparently more common than permissive/jussive ‘give’. Still the constructions and underlying conceptual semantics seem to be related, and they are transparent enough to be replicated in languages that lack one or both of them. We are, in the case of Southeast Asia in general and Myanmar in particular, not dealing with a single uniform linguistic convergence area, but rather a series of small scale contact scenarios alongside larger scale influence areas. It can be shown that regionally or nationally dominant languages, such as Burmese, Mon and Shan, exercised influence on subordinate vernaculars, while locally dominant languages may induce changes in otherwise superordinate languages, as can be seen in Mon influence on southern varieties of Burmese (see Næss & Jenny 2011).

In the following sections I will present data and analyses of ‘give’-constructions (section 2) and ‘get’-constructions (section 3), before summing up and the findings and presenting a synthesis thereof in section 4.

2. Constructions involving ‘give’¹

Short note on ‘benefactive’ and ‘causative’ constructions

Benefactive constructions are constructions that use some grammatical means, morphological or syntactic, to introduce an additional participant who prototypically benefits in some way from the state of affairs described by the predicate. Different languages employ different coding strategies in benefactive expressions, most commonly case marking on the beneficiary, adpositions, secondary (or serial) verbs, or applicativizing verbal derivation (Zúñiga & Kittilä 2010). In most Southeast Asian languages, postverbal ‘give’ is used to introduce a beneficiary to a state of affairs, either in core serialization as in Thai and Khmer (Bisang 1992:), or root (or nuclear) serialization as in Mon (Jenny 2005:213ff). Benefactives can have different concrete readings, not all of which are necessarily present in all benefactives. Kittilä (2010:248ff) distinguishes plain beneficiary, deputative beneficiary and recipient beneficiary as basic types, following Van Valin & LaPolla (1997), while Jenny (2010) describes a further distinction between direct, indirect, and additional benefactive in Thai. The distinction is

1 I use the gloss ‘give’ and ‘get’ as cover term for the respective verbs with basic semantics denoting a transfer of control over an object in the languages of the area under discussion. It is evident that this label does not imply that the semantics of these lexemes are identical either to the English verb nor to each other in all respects and extensions, including syntactic and collocational possibilities.

neutralized if no overt beneficiary is present and postverbal ‘give’ expresses that the activity is carried out for the benefit of someone else in Thai (Jenny 2010).

Caused events are encoded in various ways in languages around the world. Different types of causatives can be found also within individual languages, often with semantic differences. Causative constructions can be lexical, with special verbs expressing caused events, morphological, usually with an affix on the verb, periphrastic, that is involving a causative auxiliary, or biclausal, involving two clauses, one of which expresses the causation, the other the caused event. In terms of semantics, the causation can be direct or indirect, and the causee can retain or lose control over the caused event. There is some correlation between the different factors, though not an absolute one (see Dixon & Aikhenvald 2000:74ff). Syntactically, causative expressions are transitive or ditransitive. The causer is assigned the A role, the causee receives different syntactic roles in different languages. Most commonly it is demoted to O and receives formal object marking (Comrie 1989:165ff). For recent comprehensive accounts of the typology of causative constructions, see Song (1996) and Dixon & Aikhenvald (2000).

A number languages in the area under discussion make use of morphological causatives. These languages belong mainly to the Tibeto-Burman, Austronesian and Austroasiatic families, with Indo-Aryan languages in the far west of the area. In many cases these morphological causatives have lost their productivity and survive only as lexicalized fossils. Periphrastic causatives tend to replace the older morphological ones, often with initially less grammaticalized meanings. The types of causatives found in Southeast Asia and adjacent areas include all types found cross-linguistically, though not all languages make use of all types. The strongly isolating languages like Thai and Vietnamese exhibit, besides lexical causatives, only periphrastic and biclausal causatives, while other Austroasiatic and Tibeto-Burman languages have lexical, morphological as well as periphrastic causatives; the latter are often morphologized, the auxiliaries becoming verbal affixes.

Grammatical uses of ‘give’ crosslinguistically

A ditransitive verb with a basic meaning corresponding roughly to ‘give’ is found in most, if not all languages (see Newman 1996 for a detailed discussion, on which this paragraph is based), in some languages as sole ditransitive verb. In more formal terms, the typical meaning of this lexeme can be expressed as “a giver A transfers control over a object (T) to a recipient (G)”. Prototypically the transfer is done with the hands of the giver, and it often involves a transfer of possession. The giver willfully instigates the transfer, by which the thing leaves his sphere of control and enters the recipient’s sphere of control. The effect is also prototypically benefactive to the recipient. It goes without saying that any aspect of the semantics of the verb ‘give’ can be different in a given language, or that different verbs can be used to express similar states of affairs. In German, for example, the verb *geben* ‘give’ is used to express the act of passing control over an object to a recipient, without implying necessarily transfer of possession. The transfer of possession of an object, without monetary exchange, is expressed by the unrelated verb *schenken* ‘give as a present’. While the former is neutral as to the benefactive factor, the latter is commonly used only with objects that are seen as

desirable to (or desired by) the recipient. The giver as willful instigator of the transfer is foregrounded and coded as A, as is the transfer of control expressed by the verb. Either the object given (T) or the recipient (G) can be marked as primary object, based on language specific syntactic rules.

The semantics taken as basic here and which can be taken as starting point for the grammatical functions of the verb involved in different languages in Southeast Asia and adjacent regions is given in a schematic representation in (X).

(X) A passes control over T to G.

Given this semantic structure, it is a short step to extend the use of the verb ‘give’ in the sense that T is not necessarily a concrete object, but rather a state of affairs. If a giver passes the control over a state of affairs to a recipient, this leads to an interpretation as enablement or permission, or as obligation. The responsibility of the state of affairs T is transferred from A to G, with the concrete interpretation varying in individual languages. The extended function can be represented as in (X).

(X) A passes control over SoA to G.

The verb ‘give’ is thus a semantically transparent source of permissive and jussive expressions, with the source of permission or obligation foregrounded and syntactically coded as A. If this use is further grammaticalized, ‘give’ can end up as general marker of (usually indirect) causation (see Schulze 2011 for a cross-linguistic sample of ‘give’ constructions). If the grammatical extension goes even further, it can lead to ‘give’ as a marker of change of subject and/or purpose, as can be seen for example in Lao (Enfield 2007:423ff) and Mon (Jenny 2005:127f, 207ff).

Another source of indirect causative function of ‘give’ is documented in many languages around the world, including modern German, namely ‘A gives G (a T) to V’ In the this case, the original semantics of ‘give’ is still present, as in example (X), less so in example (X), where a logical theme can be imagined nonetheless, in this case most likely ‘reason’ or similar. That the causative function of ‘give’ is not fully grammaticalized in German can be seen from the fact that it is restricted to a smallish number of verbs, as the ungrammatical example (X) shows.

(X) *Ich gab ihr ein Buch zu lesen.*
 1SG.NOM give.PST.1SG 3SG.F.DAT one.N book to read.INF
 ‘I gave her a book to read.’

(X) *Das gibt mir zu denken.*
 that.N give.PRS.3SG 1SG.DAT to think.INF
 ‘That makes me think.’

(X) **Sie gab ihm zu gehen.*
 3SG.F.NOM give.PST.3SG 3SG.S.DAT to go.INF
 intended: ‘She made him go.’

Similar constructions to example (xx) are found in Jinghpo (Myitkyina), described in section 2.3, where causative ‘give’ occurs only with a concrete object handed to the

recipient (or causee). For a recent study of ‘give’ + infinitive constructions expressing causative situations in Russian, Polish, and Czech see von Waldenfels (2012).

2.1 General Southeast Asian patterns

Full verb ‘give’

The ditransitive full verb ‘give’ appears in different constructions in the languages of Southeast Asia. In Thai and Khmer, the normal structure is AVTG with simple themes and AVGT with complex themes. Quantifier expressions belonging to the theme regularly follow the recipient, irrespective of whether the theme is an overt NP or not. The two possibilities are shown in examples (xx) and (xx).

- (xx) Thai
kháw hây ɣən phǒm ma: sǎ:ɣ rǎy bà:t.
 3 give money 1M come two hundred baht
 ‘He gave me two hundred baht.’

- (xx) Thai (from an advertisement signboard)
XX hây khun mâ:k kwà: khwa:m-sùk.
 XX give 2 much more.than NML-happy
 ‘XX gives you more than happiness.’

In other languages, such as Mon, the theme regularly follows the recipient, as seen in (xx).

- (xx) Mon
ɗɛh kɔ ʔuə lɔc.
 3 give 1SG text
 ‘He gave me a book.’

Postverbal ‘give’ - benefactive and general applicative

Postverbal ‘give’ is found in most if not all languages of Southeast Asia denoting an activity that is carried out for the benefit of another person, more rarely an animal. The verbal predicate may be transitive, as in (xx) and (xx), or intransitive, as in (xx). In the former case, a literal reading with ‘give’ is possible, depending on the context and the semantics of the verb and the object/theme. This reading is not available with the transitive predicate in (xx) and the intransitive predicate in (xx).

- (xx) Thai
nák.rɪən ʔaw nǎɣ.sǔ: ma: hây khru.
 student take book come give teacher
 ‘The student brought a book for the teacher.’

- (xx) Burmese (FL.MinLouq; corpus of spoken Burmese)
hlá.tan sho té kaun ɕei? tɕhi? tɕ sho ta ko
 PN say NFUT.DEF body very love NFUT say NFUT.NML OBJ

lè θí pè pa ʔòun.

ADD know give POL still

‘Please (do me the favor and) know also that the one called Hla Tan loves (you) very much.’

(xx) Thai (Jenny 2010:385)

hà:k cam.pen khâ: cà? ta:y hây ʔeŋ dâi.

if necessary 1FAM IRR die give 2FAM get

‘If (it is) necessary, I can/am ready to die for you.’

Formally, the secondary verb ‘give’ maybe adjacent to the main verbal predicate (nuclear serialization), as in (xx), or it may be separated from it by an intervening object/theme (core serialization), as in (xx).

(xx) Mon

dəh ràn nèn kp ʔuə lòc mùə.

3 buy CAUS.come give 1SG text one

‘He bought me a book.’

(xx) Khmer (Bisang 1992:424)

ʔo:pùk tɛn siəv.phəu ʔaoy khnom.

father buy book give 1

‘Father bought me a book.’

The interpretation can be plain benefactive or deputative benefactive, depending on the context, as seen in (xxa) and (xxb).

(xx) Thai (Jenny 2010:384)

a. *thâ: khun wâ:ŋ phǒm cà? sǎ:n pha:sǎ: thay hây khun.*

if 2 free 1M IRR teach language Thai give 2

‘If you have time, I will teach you.’

b. *thâ: khun mâi wâ:ŋ phǒm cà? sǎ:n pha:sǎ: thay hây khun.*

if 2 NEG free 1M IRR teach language Thai give 2

‘If you don’t have time, I can teach for you.’

Interverbal ‘give’ - purposive and adverbial; ‘dummy causative’

If ‘give’ occurs in the construction V1 GIVE V2,² the normal interpretation is as ‘activity 1 is carried out in order to bring about the state of affairs 2’, that is, ‘give’ receives purposive reading. This is seen in examples (xx) and (xx).

(xx) Vietnamese (Bisang 1992:322)

Bây giờ tôi phải về nhà cho nhanh.

now 1SG must return house give quick

‘Now I have to go home quickly.’

² V2 can be any predicative element and is not restricted to verbal expressions.

(xx) Thai

tha:n hây ɽim náʔ khráp.
eat give full EMPH POL
'Eat your fill, sir.'

If the main verb is a desiderative expression, the function of the interverbal 'give' is what Enfield (2009:811) calls 'dummy causative', indicating a change of subject from the first to the second predicate. This construction is seen in (xx).

(xx) Mon

ɽəmè hùʔ mòc kɔ̃ kon wòŋ məŋɛ̀h kwan.
mother NEG DES give child play outside village
'The mother doesn't want her child to play outside the village.'

There is no difference between dummy causative and desiderative causative possible in many languages. Sentence (xx) can alternatively be translated as 'the mother doesn't want to let her child play outside the village'. As both desiderative and prohibitive markers are verbal (in some Southeast Asian languages only diachronically), the dummy causative function may in fact be a secondary development from desiderative and prohibitive causative expressions. The interverbal use of 'give' is less widespread than both the postverbal and preverbal varieties, though obviously very common in the languages of the core area.

Preverbal 'give'

Preverbal (or more accurately preclausal) 'give' is widespread in Southeast Asia to encode permissive and in some languages also jussive causative expressions. This can be seen as an extension of the basic semantics 'transfer of control over object to recipient' to 'transfer of control over state of affairs/event to causee', as outlined above in (xx) and (xx). The linguistic data suggest that this was indeed the path of extension, rather than from purposive to causative, as suggested by Song (1996:86f). The pattern A GIVE CAUSEE V with both transitive and intransitive V is found in all regions of Southeast Asia and South China. Examples (xx) and (xx) illustrate the permissive causatives in Maonan, a Kam-Sui (Tai-Kadai) language in southern China. In Maonan the recipient (G) usually precedes the theme (T), though the word order VTG is also possible (Lu 2008:242). The caused event thus takes the normal position of the theme.

(xx) Maonan (Lu 2008:254)

man2 ʔna:k7 ɦe2 pa:i1 ja:n1 man2.
3SG give 1SG go house 3SG
'He let me go to his house.'

(xx) Maonan (Lu 2008:254)

lja3 kam3 ʔna:k7 man2 na4 kha:u3.
wife not give 3SG consume wine
'His wife does not let him drink wine.'

Parallel constructions are abundantly found in languages belonging to all families spoken in (core) Southeast Asia, including Hmong and Cham, as seen in examples (xx) and (xx). In Hmong, either of two verbs can be used, namely *pub* ‘give as a present’ or *muab* ‘give, hand over’, apparently with no semantic difference.

(xx) Hmong (Clark 1989:203)

Nws txiv tsis pub/muab nws mus
 3 male not give 3 go
 ‘Her father won’t let her go.’

(xx) Phan Rang Cham (Thurgood 2005:508; glosses adapted)

min əmɛɛ? MəKaam oh pràɣ naaw.
 but mother PN NEG give go
 ‘But Kam’s mother would not let her go.’

The pattern found in many languages of Southeast Asia may suggest a connection between the different positions of ‘give’ with respect to the main lexical verb. Looking at Thai expressions as the ones given in (xxa-c), it is easy to derive one from the other, taking the benefactive as point of departure, as it is the most widespread construction involving ‘give’ in Southeast Asian languages.

(xx) a. *mê: sú: khənm̐ hây lû:k.*
 mother buy sweets give offspring
 ‘The mother bought sweets for her child.’

b. *mê: sú: khənm̐ hây lû:k kin.*
 mother buy sweets give offspring eat
 ‘The mother bought sweets for her child to eat.’ (‘so that the child may eat’)

c. *mê: hây lû:k kin khənm̐.*
 mother give offspring eat sweets
 ‘The mother lets the child eat sweets.’

Though the superficial similarity and of the constructions and the conceptual plausibility of a grammaticalization path from benefactive to purposive to causative are obvious, there are good reasons not to see them as different stages of a single development. First, the similarity is not absolute. In the construction in (xxa), the beneficiary can be optionally marked by the dative preposition *kàp* or *kè:*, which is not possible in (xxb) and (xxc). In (xxb) and (xxc), the verb *hây* ‘give’ can be negated, which is not possible in (xxa). The P argument of a transitive main verb, as in (xxa), obligatorily functions as P argument of both the main verb and ‘give’. In (xxb), there is no restriction on the reference of the P of the first and second main verbs, while the P argument (if any) of the first verb is coreferential with the T argument of ‘give’. In (xxc), ‘give’ may take an argument different from the argument of the verb in the caused event, in which case ‘give’ receives its literal reading, as in ‘the mother gave her child money to buy food’.

Apart from these syntactic differences, the presence of a number of languages that have only the patterns in (xxa) and (xxc), but not the ‘intermediary’ stage in (xxb) further proves the independence of the three constructions. At least in one language, namely Shan, the form of the benefactive (*pě̃n*) is different from the purposive and causative (*hew*).

2.2 Patterns in Myanmar

Burmese

Standard Burmese uses *pè* ‘give’ as full verb and as benefactive secondary verb. The basic ditransitive pattern of the lexical verb is AGTV, with the recipient (G) obligatorily case marked by postpositional *ko*. While standard Burmese does not have preverbal causative ‘give’, this function is found frequently in colloquial style in southern and central Myanmar. In upper Myanmar (Mandalay area), this usage is not completely unknown, but considered southern (or Mon) style and substandard (cf. Okano 2005; Næss & Jenny 2011). Here postverbal *khàin* ‘order’ is regularly used for both permissive and jussive causative expressions, while in central and southern colloquial Burmese a distinction is made between jussive postverbal *khàin* ‘order’ and permissive preverbal *pè* ‘give’. Compare the examples given in (xx) to (xx) from standard and colloquial Burmese.

(xx) Burmese (standard)

ʔəme θà ko zè θwà **khàin** tɛ.
mother son OBJ market go order NFUT
‘The mother allows/orders her son to go to the market.’

(xx) Burmese (colloquial)

ʔəme θà ko zè θwà **khàin** tɛ.
mother son OBJ market go order NFUT
‘The mother orders her son to go to the market.’

(xx) Burmese (colloquial)

ʔəme θà ko zè **pè** θwà tɛ.
mother son OBJ market give go NFUT
‘The mother allows her son to go to the market.’

The structure of the expression in (xx) is untypical for Burmese, suggesting a structure AGVT, with the caused event as theme of the verb ‘give’. This suggests a foreign, presumably Mon origin of this construction as an instance of pattern replication without adapting the syntax of the source to the target language. The contact scenario is outlined in section 2.3 below. Synchronically, the construction *pè*+V in colloquial Burmese can be analysed as a causative verb, but the negator *mə-* can occur either before the main verb or before the causative *pè* ‘give’, which is evidence against a one-word analysis.

While Burmese uses the indigenous construction with postverbal causative in control expressions with different subject and in prohibitive constructions, the construction

with preverbal ‘give’ is possible in both cases, giving a desiderative or prohibitive causative reading. This difference, which is not possible in core Southeast Asian languages, including Mon, the putative source of the Burmese construction, is illustrated in examples (xx) and (xx), both of which merge in Mon in the sentence in (xx).

(xx) Burmese (standard/colloquial)

təənɔ θú ko mə=θwà se təhin phù.
 1M 3.DEP OBJ NEG=go CAUS DES NEG
 ‘I don’t want him to go.’

(xx) Burmese (colloquial)

təənɔ θú ko pè mə=θwà təhin phù.
 1M 3.DEP OBJ give NEG=go DES NEG
 ‘I don’t want to let him go.’

(xx) Mon

ʔuə hùʔ mòc kɔ dɛh ʔa.
 1SG NEG DES give 3 go
 ‘I don’t want him to go.’ or ‘I don’t want to let him go.’

Burmese (including colloquial Burmese) does not use ‘give’ to introduce purposive adverbial expressions or a change of subject in control constructions, as is found in the languages of core Southeast Asia, a fact that further underpins the view that the construction is a (recent?) result of language contact and not grammaticalized to the extent it is in Thai, Khmer, and Vietnamese, for example. This also suggests that the development of the causative function is independent of the purposive function, as argued above.

Karen

Karen is a group of Tibeto-Burman languages that at some point of their development changed the basic word order from verb final to verb medial, presumably under influence from neighboring languages. In Kayah Li the lexical verb *dá* ‘give’ (Solnit 1997:314) is also used as preverbal causative marker (Solnit 1997:65). Unlike in the standard Southeast Asian pattern, Karen uses ‘give’ to causativize the verb directly, rather than the clause, resulting in the pattern A give-V CAUSEE. The causee appears as object of the causative verb complex, rather than the subject of the caused event. The Kayah Li construction is thus similar to the construction found in colloquial Burmese described above. Examples illustrating the ditransitive and causative constructions in Kayah Li are given in (xx) and (xx).

(xx) Kayah Li (Solnit 1997:314)

ʔa lɛ dá lū ʔíkwa tə=phre tə=phō rɔ.
 3 descend give 3OBV stick one=CL.HUM one=CL.BLOOM PTCL
 ‘He came down and gave each a stick.’

(xx) Kayah Li (Solnit 1997:65)

vē **dá** cwá ne to.
 1SG give go 2SG NEG
 'I won't let you go.'

In Sgaw (Moulmein), 'give' as lexical verb is expressed by *yéʔ*, while the causative expressions are formed by preverbal *duʔ*, probably cognate with Kayah Li *dá*. Relevant examples are given in (xx) and (xx).

(xx) Sgaw (adapted from Jones 1961:212)
tunéʔ təʔ=bló sɔpa báʔ yéʔ ñáʔlíʔ=phó lá ʔəʔ=phómúʔθəʔdá lɔ.
 then one=time king hit give Nyali=little to 3SG=youngest.daughter CFP
 'Then one time the king had to give Nyali his youngest daughter.'

(xx) Sgaw (adapted from Jones 1961:53)
təʔ.báʔ duʔ le diʔ (ʔɔ) təʔ=yé.
 NEG CAUS go yet (3s) NEG=good
 'Don't let him go yet.'

The Kayah Li verb 'give' and Sgaw causative *duʔ* probably go back to a Proto-Tibeto-Burman root **ter/*s-ter* 'give, CAUSATIVE' (Matisoff 2003:399, 615), which appears in Lai Chin in expressions like *tlaak-tèr* 'cause to fall', *kanʔ-tèr* 'cause to burn', *rilʔ-tèr* 'cause to roll' (s. also Peterson 2003:418), and in Tibetan as *stér-ba* 'to give, bestow, grant, concede, allow; let, permit' (Jäschke 1881:222). The development in Karen acn be summarized as in (xx).

(xx) PTB **ter* 'give, permit' → Kayah Li *dá* 'give, let > CAUS', Karen *duʔ* 'let, CAUS' ('give' replaced by new root, as in Shan: *hew* 'CAUS < give', *pě̃n* 'give < share').

This suggests that the connection between 'give' and causation is old in the Tibeto-Burman family, though it has been lost (and later reintroduced) in Burmese and a number of other languages, including some Jinghpo varieties, as seen below in section 2.3.

Shan

In Shan, the inherited verb meaning 'give' is *hew* (cognate with Thai *hây*), which is used in the standard language (literary Shan) only as preverbal (or preclausal) permissive/jussive causative. It has been replaced as full verb as well as in postverbal (benefactive) function by *pě̃n* 'give', originally 'share'. The pattern with the lexical verb *pě̃n* 'give' is AVGT. The different patterns found in Shan are given in examples (xx) to (xx).

(xx) Shan (Hsihsaing)
kěu pě̃n mén sa.ʔouʔ.
 1SG give 3SG book
 'I gave him a book.'

(xx) Shan (*Hsenwi chronicle*)
sě̃n p̄xn thẵm hew wa ceu.phâ ceu.nãn khě̃u hỗn kwà

if 3PL ask CAUS say lord lady PL call go

ʔàn kǎn hǎ.

count rafter palace

‘If someone should ask, let them tell him that the lord and the lady called them to count the rafters in the palace.’

(xx) Shan (*Shan conversation guide for Thai*)

yóm pǎn ʔít nuŋ còŋ lei nè.

decrease give little.bit one Q get Q

‘Can you reduce (the price) for (me) a little bit.’

In some varieties of Shan, *pǎn* has replaced *hew* also in preverbal causative function. This is shown in example (xx) from Anisakhan village, near Pyin U Lwin. The same extension of *pǎn* ‘give’ to causative function is also found in the area south of Taunggyi (data from Hsihsaing).

(xx) Shan (Anisakhan)

kǎu ʔəm pǎn mén neŋ.

1SG NEG give 3SG sit

‘I don’t let him sit.’

Interverbal ‘give’ occurs in Shan in the form *hew*, also in varieties that have replaced this form by *pǎn* in other contexts. Its use seems to be restricted to (purposive) causation and dummy causatives and it is not found in more general adverbial expressions. Relevant examples are given in (xx) and (xx), the former of which would use ‘give’ in Thai to introduce the adverbial expression (see (xx) above).

(xx) Shan (Hsihsaing)

kǎn ʔim-ʔim ná.

eat full-RED EMPH

‘Eat your fill.’

(xx) Shan (Hsihsaing)

ʔəm khew hew mén hét kǎn kǎŋ khún.

NEG want CAUS 3 do work middle night

‘I don’t want him to work during the night.’

Mon

Mon behaves very much like the languages of core Southeast Asia with respect to the use of ‘give’ in all three positions. The verb *kə* ‘give’ is used as full lexical verb, as postverbal benefactive marker, as well as in preverbal position. In interverbal position its use is, at least in Mon varieties spoken in Myanmar, restricted to the ‘dummy causative’ function. It does not introduce purposive adverbial expressions.

Already Old Mon inscriptions of the 11th century show the permissive causative use

of <kil> ‘give’, as illustrated in (xx).

(xx) Old Mon (Kubyaukgyi)

tirta to? tluñ sak deh kil lop sni.
 heretic PL come NEG 3 give enter house
 ‘The heretics come (but) they don’t let them enter the house.’

In modern Mon, the structure remains unchanged, as seen in (xx).

(xx) Modern Mon (WW2nc_mn)

dēh kɔ (poy) dāc mən ha.
 3 give 1PL ride stay Q
 ‘Would they let (us) ride?’

In Old Mon, the form <or> ‘cause, command’ is used both for jussive and permissive causatives, while <kil> ‘give’ seems to be more restricted to permissive contexts. Example (xxa) is the last sentence of the Myazedi inscription, showing the permissive use of <or>. The parallel text in Burmese in (xxb) has postverbal <ciy>, corresponding to modern Burmese *se* ‘command > cause’. Interestingly, the Pyu version of the same sentence, given in (xxc), seems to use postverbal *pā*: ‘give’ to express the permissive causative notion, though the Pyu language is still not very well understood and the exact structure of the sentence unclear.

(xx) a. Old Mon (Myazedi inscription)

yañ ñirñāc kyek trey mettey laḥ or deh go?
 FR.NP NML.see holy.object holy PN PROH cause 3 get
 ‘Don’t let him get the sight of the holy Buddha Metteya.’

b. Old Burmese (Myazedi inscription)

arimittiyā purhā skhañ a phū ra ciy.
 PN Buddha lord NEG behold get cause
 ‘Let him not be able to behold the Lord Buddha Ariya Metteya.’

c. Pyu (Myazedi inscription; Taw Sein Ko & Duroiselle 1919:59ff; Shafer 1943:337)

medeyā dā.ḥa: dī chí: tí tmū ma pā: che cho:.
 PN excellent(?) sight(?) get LOC presence NEG GIVE PRS OPT(?)
 ‘May he never be permitted to approach the presence of the lord Buddha Ariya Metteya.’

In modern Mon jussive causatives can alternatively be expressed by preverbal *ciə?ka* ‘use, order’, and occurrences of permissive use of preverbal *kɔ* ‘give’ may be more frequent. But *kɔ* ‘give’ is also used in jussive contexts, as the following example (xx) shows, where the first instance is permissive, the second jussive. In example (xx), the context permits only jussive reading. Modern Mon thus has a marked form for jussive causative expressions, *ciə?ka* ‘use, order’, and a general form covering both permissive and jussive causatives, *kɔ* ‘give’, while the reverse situation held in Old Mon, with a dedicated permissive causative <kil> ‘give’ and a general form <?or> ‘cause, command’.

(xx) Modern Mon (WW2nc_mn)

dɛh hù? kɔ̃ dʊn ciə? pɔŋ dɔə hənɔŋ pùh, dɛh hù?
3 NEG give cook eat cooked.rice LOC shade NEG 3 NEG

kəmpə lə pùh, dɛh kɔ̃ dʊn ciə? pɔŋ dɔə prɔə.
cover.with.roof deposit NEG 3 give cook eat cooked.rice LOC rain
'They (the Japanese) wouldn't let us cook under the trees, they didn't make a roof, they had us cook our rice in the rain.'

(xx) Modern Mon (KM_SR)

əmè dɛh kɔ̃ mən phèə mən kə? ʔəyək həcəm hnam.
mother 3 give stay school Mon get age eight years

ʔəmè dɛh kɔ̃ mən toə, ʔəmè dɛh həm, ʔuə həm ʔuə kəliəŋ
mother 3 give stay finish mother 3 speak 1SG speak 1SG return

mən phèə həmèə plən nɔŋ. dɛh həm, hù? kə? ra?
stay school Burmese again ASRT 3 speak NEG get FOC
'My mother had me go to the Mon school when I was eight years old. She had me stay there and my mother said, I said I'm going back to the Burmese school. She said no, you can't.'

The ditransitive structure in Mon is AVGT, the causative structure is 'A give CAUSEE V'. The causee thus takes the place of the G argument, the caused event appears as theme. The resulting construction is biclausal in Mon. The causee remains subject (S or A) of the caused event, as shown by the choice of non-causative directionals. Directionals associated with causative predicates regularly take the causative form if the patient is the argument that is moved by the event described by the main predicate, as seen in (xx). This is not the case in periphrastic causative expressions, as seen in (xx).

(xx) Modern Mon

ʔəmè kəwac phyao na kon.ɲàc.
mother CAUS.walk CAUS.return CAUS.go child
'The mother made the child walk back (home).'

(xx) Modern Mon

ʔəmè kɔ̃ kon.ɲàc kwac cao ʔa.
mother give child walk return go.
'The mother let the child walk back (home).'

For a more detailed account of 'give' in Mon, including its development, see Jenny (2005:207ff).

Palaung

Palaung, an Austroasiatic language (or group of languages) spoken in northern Myanmar

as well as across the border in Thailand and China, has *dɛ:h* ‘give’ as a full verb as well as preverbal causative marker. The ditransitive pattern is AVGT, the causative marker occurs in preclausal position, between the causer and the causee, with the caused event following the causee, like the theme follows the recipient. The function as purposive and dummy causative marker is not found in the data available to the author and awaits clarification as more data and grammatical descriptions of Palaung are being produced. The following examples (xx) and (xx) illustrate the ditransitive and causative constructions, with (xx) an intermediary example, *dɛ:h* ‘give’ having both causative and its literal meaning.

(xx) (Milne 1921:170)

dɛ:h ɔ: *rale:h* *lǎ* *u:* *ku:*.
give 1SG husband good one CL
‘Give me a good husband.’

(xx) (Milne 1921:

ma: *ʌ:n* *ra:t* *de:* *dɛ:h* *ʌ:n* *du:ɛ* *lǎchǒp* *shɛ:ŋ*.
mother 3SG steal self give 3SG bring ring gem
‘Her mother secretly let her bring rings and gems.’

(xx) (Milne 1921:146)

khu:n *phi:* *le:h* *dɛ:h* *ʌ:n* *hɔ:m* *ple:* *bri:* *ʃi:n*.
master ghost descend give 3SG eat fruit forest ripe.
‘The great spirit came down and gave her ripe jungle fruit to eat.’

Judging from the available data, the Palaung structures correspond closely to the structures found in Mon, both in form and function. There is a marked and probably relevant difference to the syntax of the corresponding constructions in Austroasiatic languages further east, such as Khmer and Vietnamese. Palaung is also strikingly similar to Shan, which in turn differs in syntax from the closely related Thai in the core area of Southeast Asia.

2.3 Contact scenarios

Core Southeast Asia is not only a large convergence area or sprachbund, but it also consists of a number of small scale contact scenarios. The same is obviously true for Myanmar, which, in spite of being a political entity with more or less strong centralized control by the ethnically dominant Burmese in the peripheral areas, is home to a large number of local languages. Some of these languages function as lingua franca in their immediate context, leading to influence on the subordinate local languages. In the following two of these contact scenarios are outlined.

Mon and Burmese

Whereas Mon was used as literary (and possibly official) language in the Burmese kingdom of Bagan during the 11th century, it ceased to be a politically and culturally dominant language in Myanmar at least since the 16th century, when the last Mon

kingdom fell to the expanding Burmese empire. Ever since the 14th century Middle Mon period, Mon was exposed to increasing Burmese influence, which led to a partial restructuring of the language (see Jenny 2011, forth.). Although Mon is a subordinate language on the national level, it is the language of prestige at least in some social groups on the local level in some areas, where large numbers of original L2 speakers of Burmese influenced the structure of Burmese in these areas (see Næss & Jenny 2011). One possible result of Mon influence in Burmese that spread beyond the immediate area of Mon influence is the use of causative preverbal ‘give’ in colloquial Burmese. The following points suggest that the Burmese construction is indeed a pattern replication of a Mon model, though not as recent an innovation as suggested by Okano (2005).

- i. The construction does not conform to general Burmese syntax.
- ii. It is less widespread, both functionally and geographically, than in other languages of the area.
- iii. The construction is fully transparent in Mon and in Burmese, facilitating the replication even across typological boundaries.
- iv. The construction is prominent in Mon (and other languages of Southeast Asia).
- v. The construction fills a conceptual gap in standard Burmese (permissive causative) which is presumably more acutely felt by bilingual speakers.

Mon is (or was until very recently) the language of the majority in Mon State and adjacent areas in southern Myanmar. Although most Mon are fluent bilingual speakers of Mon and Burmese, their Burmese variety shows Mon influence to varying degrees in phonology and syntax, to a lesser extent in vocabulary. Bilingual speakers tend to make use of the whole repertoires of their linguistic possibilities in what Matras (2009:240ff) has called ‘creative pivot matching’. A speaker chooses the most efficient (or temporarily most activated) construction to achieve his communicative goal and fills it with the vocabulary appropriate for the speech context. In the course of this process, a mismatch between construction and lexicon may occur, that is, the speaker chooses the construction of one language and fills it with vocabulary of the other. The expected result of a Mon-Burmese pivot match for a permissive causative expression is exactly what we find in colloquial Burmese preverbal ‘give’.

The possibilities of Burmese *pè* ‘give’ are more restricted than the constructions available in Mon. Burmese allows, besides the use as full lexical verb, only postverbal benefactive and preverbal permissive (very rarely jussive) causative *pè* ‘give.’ There is no dummy causative or purposive use of ‘give’ in Burmese. This can be seen as evidence of incomplete contact-induced grammaticalization, as postulated by Heine and Kuteva (2005:117ff). According to this theory, an element in the replica or target language undergoes grammaticalization along the same path as the corresponding element in the source language, but does not achieve the same degree of grammaticalization. Assuming a hypothetical grammaticalization path from causative to dummy causative to purposive (but see (xx) above), we can assume that Burmese stopped after the first stage of grammaticalization.

Another, more likely explanation of the different extent of grammatical uses of ‘give’ in

Mon as source language and Burmese as target language, lies in the above mentioned gap in the Burmese system felt by speakers of Mon with Burmese as L2. Formal Burmese has a semantically neutral periphrastic causative form with postverbal *se*. The original semantics of *se* is probably ‘order, command’, but this meaning is not available to present day speakers. The use of *se* in colloquial Burmese is restricted to desiderative and prohibitive contexts, the area covered by dummy causatives in Mon. Purposive adverbial expressions in colloquial Burmese are formed either by deverbal derivation of the secondary (subordinate) predicate, or by the postverbal purposive marker *ʔaun* ‘so that’. Jussive causatives are formed in the colloquial language with *khàin* ‘order, command’ as postverbal secondary verb, the jussive semantics of which is transparent in the modern language. In spite of this semantic transparency, *khàin* ‘order > CAUSATIVE’ is used in upper Myanmar as general causative marker, including permissive. In contact with Mon, where a distinction can be made between permissive ‘give’ and jussive ‘order’, the underspecificity of Burmese is felt as a conceptual gap, which is filled via replication of the Mon pattern. As the gap concerns only the permissive function of ‘give’, not the other possibilities it has in Mon, this was the only function to be replicated in Burmese. Additionally, the jussive semantics of Burmese *khàin* ‘order, command’ is closer to Mon *ciəʔka* ‘use, order’, with which it is usually associated, than to the general causative marker *kə* ‘give’. As *ciəʔka* ‘use, order’ is restricted to jussive causative contexts in Mon, so is *khàin* ‘order, command’ in contact varieties of Burmese. In other words, the unmarked form of Burmese, *khàin*, was identified with the (semantically similar) marked form in Mon, *ciəʔka*, and was replaced by a calque of the unmarked form of Mon, preverbal ‘give’.

One interesting outcome of the replication of the preverbal causative ‘give’ construction in Burmese is the emerging distinction between change of subject in control and prohibitive expressions and desiderative and prohibitive permissive causative, which is not possible in Mon and other languages of core Southeast Asia. This leads to a conceptual gap in the system of Mon in contact with Burmese, Burmese having means to make a difference not available in Mon. Why this gap is not filled by some sort of replication of Burmese patterns in Mon remains to be explained. Possibly it is gaps in the L2 of bilingual speakers that tend to be felt as deficient rather than gaps in their L1, a hypothesis that needs to be confirmed by more data from this and other contact situations.

Shan and Jinghpo

Another contact scenario is found in northern Myanmar, where Shan serves as lingua franca (besides Burmese) in a vast area not only within the boundaries of the Shan State. Further north, in Kachin State, Jinghpo varieties are the most widespread languages. Jinghpo as spoken in the area of Myitkyina makes very restricted use of causative preverbal ‘give’, mostly in expressions that involve a physical handing over of some object to a recipient to do something with it. In Turung, a Jinghpo variety spoken in Assam, only postverbal ‘give’ occurs as purposive and benefactive marker (see Morey 2010:408f). There are no occurrences of preverbal causative ‘give’. Also in Jinghpo spoken in China, the grammatical uses of ‘give’ seem to be restricted to postverbal

benefactive and, as extension thereof, malefactive (see Peng & Chapbell 2011). The ditransitive and extended ditransitive-causative patterns in Myitkyina Jinghpo are given in (xx), and (xx) and (xx) respectively.

(xx) Jinghpo (Myitkyina)
ndai laika-buk shi phe dzɔʔ ya re.
 this book-paper 3SG OBJ give give SP
 ‘Give him this book.’

(xx) Jinghpo (Myitkyina)
ndai laika-buk shi phe dzɔʔ thi na i.
 this book-paper 3SG OBJ give read FUT Q
 ‘Will you let him read this book?’

(xx) Jinghpo (Myitkyina)
shi n-dzɔʔ sha.
 3SG NEG-give eat
 ‘He doesn’t let (me) eat it.’

If no actual act of giving is involved, the use of *dzɔʔ* ‘give’ is excluded and the regular causative marker must be used. This also holds for dummy causative expressions, as seen in examples (xx) and (xx).

(xx) Jinghpo (Myitkyina)
shi phe sa shəkhun na i.
 3SG OBJ go CAUS FUT Q
 ‘Will you let him go?’

(xx) Jinghpo (Myitkyina)
shi phe n-kam sa khun na ai.
 3SG OBJ NEG-want go CAUS FUT SP
 ‘I don’t want him to go.’

Another Jinghpo variety, spoken in the area of Muhse on the Myanmar-China border, shows a very different picture. Muhse is a commercial hub in the area, with a very mixed and multilingual population. Besides Burmese and Chinese, Shan has an important, though not official, status in the area. In the variety of Jinghpo spoken here, preverbal *dzɔʔ* ‘give’ can be used in all contexts as preverbal causative, including dummy causative constructions. The examples (xx) to (xx) illustrate the Muhse Jinghpo variety with the same sentences as given above (xx) - (xx) for Myitkyina Jinghpo. Apart from the extended use of preverbal ‘give’, Muhse Jinghpo also shows a reordering in the demonstrative-noun complex, with the demonstrative following the noun, as in Shan, but unlike Myitkyina Jinghpo (and unlike Chinese, the other major contact language in the area).

(xx) Jinghpo (Muhse)
laika ndei shi phe dzɔʔ ʔo.

book this 3SG OBJ give IMP
'Give him this book.'

(xx) Jinghpo (Muhse)
laika ndei shi phe dzɔʔ thi na kun.
book this 3SG OBJ give read FUT Q
'Will you let him read this book?'

(xx) Jinghpo (Muhse)
shi n-dzɔʔ sha ai.
3SG NEG-give eat SP
'He doesn't let me eat it.'

(xx) Jinghpo (Muhse)
shi phe dzɔʔ sa na kun.
3SG OBJ give go FUT Q
'Will you let him go?'

(xx) Jinghpo (Muhse)
shi phe n-kam dzɔʔ sa ai.
3SG OBJ NEG-want give go SP
'I don't want him to go.'

Jinghpo has a productive causative construction marked by postverbal (*shə*)*khun*, which is Muhse Jinghpo seems to have been replaced by preverbal *dzɔʔ* 'give'. As there is no conceptual gap in the Jinghpo system that was filled by replication of a Shan pattern, other explanations have to be sought in this contact situation from the ones given above in the case of Mon and Burmese contact. More data on the languages spoken in the Muhse area and on the social factors involved are needed, but the language contact obviously is very intense, leading to a more thorough mixture of the systems, as is also shown by the reordering of demonstrative and nouns.

2.4 Beyond Myanmar

Causative 'give' is also found in languages further to the west, such as Mongsen Ao (Tibeto-Burman, Northeast India) and Kham (Tibeto-Burman, Nepal). The respective structures involve a nominalized main verb, which functions as object of a finite form of 'give'. Relevant examples are given in (xx) and (xx).

(xx) Mongsen Ao (Coupe 2007:196)
nì nə kə-ni wa-ì-pàʔ khiʔ-ùʔ.
1SG AGT 1SG.POSS-wife go-IRR-NML give.PST-DEC
'I let my wife go.' [she wanted to go]

(xx) Mongsen Ao (Coupe 2007:197)
nì nə niŋ tʃàɿ li á-hŋáʔ phàʔ-ì-paʔ khiʔ-ùʔ.

1SG AGT 2PL.POSS son DAT NRL-fish catch-IRR-NML give.PST-DEC
 'I let your son catch fish.' or 'I gave fish to your son to catch.'

(xx) Kham (Watters 2002:333)

je-lai wazə geda: lã:wo ŋa-ya-ci-zya.
 you.PL-OBJ only grain take-NML 1SG-give-2PL-CONT
 'I am permitting only you (pl) to take grain.'

Similar constructions with postverbal 'give', though with no morphology to indicate a distinction of the syntactic status of the main verb and the causative marker, is found in Lahu, but there only with intransitive bases, as described by Matisoff (1973:247) and seen in example (xx).

(xx) Lahu (Matisoff 1973:247)

nà pî 'hurt so.'
šĩ pî 'kill'
pə pî 'bring to an end'

Transitive verbs combined with postverbal *pî* 'give' regularly get benefactive reading, as in other languages of the area. The interpretation of postverbal *pî* 'give' in Lahu thus depends on the transitivity of the main predicate. This serves to avoid ambiguity where no morphology is available to keep postverbal causatives and benefactives apart. Compare the benefactive expression in Kham in (xx), which also involves postverbal 'give' (in a reduced form and glossed as BEN by Watters), but with different morphology from the causative construction.

(xx) Kham (Watters 2002:249)

no-e ŋa-lai o-bənduk sətəĩ-d-y-ā-ke-o.
 he-ERG me-OBJ 3SG-gun show-NF-BEN-1SG-PFV-3SH
 'He showed me his gun.' (lit. 'showing gave')

In a number of Tibeto-Burman languages of Northeast India and presumably Northwest Myanmar, a causative prefix appears that seems to be related to the verb 'give'. These cases still need an explanation, as there are no obvious neighboring languages with preverbal causative 'give', which can be seen as source of contact influence. I list two of these cases here to complete the picture without attempting to give an analysis, awaiting further data of the languages in the Myanmar-Northeast India area.

Angami Naga (Giridhar 1980:66ff, Matisoff 2003:132)

Verbs with causative prefix *pê-* are for example

(xx) *krâ* → *pêkrâ* 'cause to cry'
vó → *pêvó* 'cause to go'
šĩ → *pêšĩ* 'cause to know, inform'

In addition, some kinds of adverbs are also formed with prefix *pê-* (presumably from *piê*

‘give’), as in (xx) (Giridhar 1980:83).

- (xx) *vī* → *pēvī* ‘well’
soù → *pêsoù* ‘deeply’
khro → *pêkhro* ‘be down’ → ‘down’

In some cases the forms receive a redundant *biê*-, presumably ‘give’, as seen in (xx).

- (xx) *tsā* → *pêtsā* → *biêpêtsā* ‘cause to be small’

The full verb ‘give’ is illustrated in the following examples (xx) and (xx).

- (xx) (Giridhar 1980:46) *piêtsà* ‘give’
â puô rākā kriê puô kêtsē piê â tsà.
 1SG father rupee hundred one send give 1SG give (?)
 ‘My father sent me hundred rupees.’

- (xx) (Giridhar 1980:77)
nô rākā puô piê â tsâ rô.
 2SG rupee one give 1SG give (?) COND
 ‘If you give me one rupee...’

Mikir (Grüssner 1978)

Grüssner lists the following morphemes related to the causative formations in Mikir.

- /pī-/ ‘give’ (p. 205)
 /pa’/ - /pe’/ ‘causative’ (pp. 93f)

He illustrates the causative and double causative forms as in (xx), but there are no examples of these form, in actual use, so that nothing can be said about the syntactic structure of the causative (or ditransitive) constructions in this language.

- (xx) *mē* ‘good’ → *pe-mē* ‘make better, improve’
thi ‘die’ → *pe-thi* ‘kill’ → *pa-pe-thi* ‘let kill’
ti ‘egg’ → *pa-ti* ‘lay eggs’ → *pa-pa-ti* ‘let lay eggs’

3. Constructions involving ‘get’

Short note on *get* → *modal*

The same state of affairs that is expressed by ‘give’ can be expressed, with reversed perspective, by a transitive verb with the basic meaning ‘get’ (Enfield 2003 prefers the gloss ‘acquire’ as basic meaning). In this case, it is the recipient which is foregrounded and coded as A, while the giver or source remains unspecified (and usually unexpressed). The schematic representation of the semantics of ‘get’ is given in (X).

- (X) A receives control over O (from source S).

One widespread grammaticalized function of the verb ‘get’ in Southeast Asian languages

is something along the lines ‘X performs/can perform an activity V because of some earlier state of affairs’ (Enfield 2003:290ff). This earlier state of affairs that leads to or enables the occurrence of the situation described by the main verb of the clause is backgrounded, but understood to be present and relevant. The schematic representation of the extended use is given in (X).

(X) A receives control over SoA.

If A gains control or responsibility of a state of affairs, he is either allowed or obliged to perform the activity. In this case, unlike in constructions with ‘get’ in its literal meaning, the source cannot be overtly expressed in the clause. In a number of languages of Southeast Asia, there is a difference between preverbal and postverbal ‘get’ (Enfield 2003). Modals that originate in a lexical verb meaning ‘get, acquire’ are also found in northern Europe (e.g. English *get to V* and *have got to V*, and Swedish *få* ‘get, may, must’). It is not clear how close the correspondence between the ‘get’ constructions in northern Europe and Southeast Asia is. Van der Auwera *et al.* (2009) propose the term “acquisitive modality” for the various grammaticalized functions of ‘get’, a label that is based on the lexical origin rather than the actual function of the modal. In the present context, it is the preverbal (in core Southeast Asian languages) form that is relevant, as it corresponds to the preverbal causative function of ‘give’ in a number of features. Postverbal ‘get’ is better seen as grammaticalized serial verb or resultative verb compound, extended from expressions like ‘take and get’ or ‘look for and get’ (cf. Jenny 2005:215ff; 2009) and not connected to the preverbal use of ‘get’ (but see Haiman 1999 for a different view). The parallelism between ‘give’ and ‘get’ constructions, though not perfect, shows striking similarities in the languages of the greater Southeast Asian area. The spread zone of the two constructions do not fully coincide, but they are to a large extent coextensive and the two constructions can be seen as related phenomena or parallel grammaticalizations. Apparently ‘get’ constructions are more widespread to the West of Southeast Asia, including standard Burmese and older stages of the language.

3.1 General Southeast Asian patterns

The general pattern of Southeast Asian constructions involving grammatical uses of pre- and postverbal ‘get’ has been comprehensively described by Enfield (2003). Two main construction types are found in the verb medial languages of Southeast Asia, namely A GET V (P) and A V GET, the latter in some languages with a difference according to the position of the P argument, A GET P V and A GET V P. The postverbal constructions usually express a general possibility or absence of any obstacles for A to carry out V, or more generally, the possibility for V to come about. Preverbal ‘get’, on the other hand, is more difficult to describe semantically. Probably all functions can be reduced to (or derived from) the basic notion given by Enfield (2003:290ff) as ‘result of prior event’, that is, a state of affair comes about because of a prior state of affairs. This of course is a description of a caused event or state of affairs, with the causing event backgrounded. In this sense, the constructions with preverbal ‘get’ are connected with constructions with preverbal causative ‘give’. Like in the case of ‘give’, many languages also have interverbal ‘get’ expressing adverbial notions. The different patterns with ‘get’ are described and illustrated in the following subsections.

Postverbal ‘get’ - from resultative verb compound to general possibility

In many Southeast Asian languages, activity verbs do not necessarily include the outcome of the activity, but denote the willful act by the A argument. The result of the activity can optionally be expressed by a resultative verb. Similarly, the addition of a negated resultative verb indicates that the activity was not carried out with success. This kind of construction, which has come to be known as ‘resultative verb compounds’ (RVC), is a common feature also of Chinese (see Li & Thompson 1981:54ff). In example (xx) from Thai, only the addition of the resultative verb *cɤː* ‘find, meet’ indicates that the activity of looking for the object was successful. Similarly, *kin* ‘consume’ in (xxa) does not necessarily entail the actual consumption of the bread, but rather the act of trying to achieve the goal of eating something. The result can easily be canceled by addition of a negated resultative verb, as in (xxb).

(xx) Thai

phûən hǎː nəŋ.sǔː cɤː léːw.
 friend seek book find NSIT
 ‘The friend has (looked for and) found the book.’

(xx) Thai

a. *phǒm kin khənm.pəŋ.*
 1M consume rice
 ‘I’m eating rice.’

b. *phǒm kin khənm.pəŋ mây loŋ.*
 1M consume bread NEG go.down
 ‘I cannot eat bread.’ (‘trying to eat bread, it doesn’t go down (my throat).’)

One resultative verb compound pattern, namely V + ‘get’, has been generalized and its use extended to contexts, where no actual obtainment of an object is involved. This led to postverbal ‘get’ being used as general indicator of successful completion of an activity and general marker of possibility to carry out an activity. Postverbal ‘get’ is in most Southeast Asian languages a free form which can occur on its own and may be separated from the main lexical verb by other elements, such as objects and the negation particle.

Interverbal ‘get’ - adverbial

Between two predicative elements, the second of which can be either a verb or an adverbial expression, ‘get’ frequently conveys the meaning that the activity denoted by the first verb is carried out with the result or to the extent described by the second predicating element. This function has been described by Enfield as “descriptive complementation” (2003:250ff). Relevant examples are given in (xx) to (xx).

(xx) Thai

khǎw yùː kruŋthêːp dây sǎːm piː léːw.
 3HUM stay PN get three year NSIT
 ‘He has been in Bangkok for three years.’

(xx) Thai
fə̀ràn̩ khon ní: phû:t thay dâi di:
 foreigner CL PROX speak Thai get good
 'This foreigner can speak Thai well.'

(xx) Thai
mê: di:cay thî: lû:k sò:p dâi thî:nùŋ.
 mother happy SUB offspring take.exam get ORD-one
 'The mother is happy that her child got the best grade in the exam.'

Preverbal patterns

Preverbal 'get' is described differently in the languages of Southeast Asia, including indigenous textbooks and grammars. One common notion that is associated with it is past tense. This definition of preverbal 'get' is used for example in traditional Thai grammars, though its actual use does not entail the notion of past tense. The position taken here is the one postulated by Enfield (2003:290ff), according to which preverbal 'get' (or 'acquire' in Enfield's analysis) denotes an event that comes about because of an earlier event or 'event as result of a prior event'. This implies that preverbal 'get' denotes a caused, whether directly or indirectly, event. Different concrete interpretations are found in different languages, some of which can lead to past tense implicature. If an event is enabled or facilitated by a prior event, it is most likely placed in the past and in most likely came about. In some languages, including Thai, negated preverbal 'get' is used to mark wide scope negation, often associated with negated past. Relevant examples are given in (xx) to (xx).

(xx) Kmhmu Cwang (Enfield 2003:298; *rslt.prr.evnt* = 'get')
gaang ô' yat pè' ôm, ô' bwan klyoong ôm hwa.
 house 1 be.at next.to river 1 *rslt.prr.evnt* swim river often
 'My house is close to the river, (so) I get to go swimming often.'

(xx) Hmong (Enfield 2003:299)
kuv tau mus Mis.Kuj.
 1 *rslt.prr.evnt* go America
 'I went to America.' or 'I got to go to America.'

(xx) Thai
phǒm yaŋ mâi dâi kin khâ:w.
 1M yet NEG get eat rice
 'I haven't eaten yet.'

In the last example (xx), the collocation of negated preverbal 'get' with *yaŋ* 'yet' regularly gets the interpretation of negated past/perfect tense. This pattern is widespread in Southeast Asian languages, as is the use of negated preverbal 'get' to express wide-scope or contrastive negation, as in (xx).

(xx) Thai

mây dâý pay thîaw, pay tham ηa:n.
 NEG get go go.for.fun go do work
 'I'm not going there for fun, I'm going to work.' (tense neutral)

Preverbal 'get' is a bound form which cannot occur on its own in a one word utterance, though it may be separated from the main lexical verb by the verbal negator, depending on the scope of the negation.

3.2 Patterns in Myanmar

Burmese

In Burmese, only postverbal *yá* 'get' occurs, but it appears in two different syntactic constructions and covers (at least) three different functions (see Jenny 2009). The first of the two structures is with *yá* 'get' as free morpheme in a subordinate construction, the two clauses linked by the general subordinator *ló* 'that, because' in colloquial Burmese, and by the sequential marker *ywé* 'and then, therefore' in formal Burmese. This construction gives the general possibility reading, as in (xx).

(xx) Burmese
θu di sa.ŋou? yu ló yá tɛh.
 3 this book take SUB get NFUT
 'He can take this book.' (lit. 'taking this book, he gets it.')

(xx) Burmese
tɛaŋɔ θwà ló yá là.
 1M go SUB get Q
 'May I go?'

In these examples, the form *yá* 'get' is a free morpheme in the sense that it is separated from the main lexical verb by the subordinator *ló* and, if present, the preverbal negator *mə=*, and that it can appear on its own, as in a short answer to (xx), given in (xx).

(xx) Burmese
yá tɛh.
 get NFUT
 'Yes.' (lit. 'can, may')

The negated form of this construction is *V ló NEG yá*, 'cannot V', 'may not V', as in (xx).

(xx) Burmese
θu di né θwà ló mə=yá phù.
 3 this day go SUB NEG=get NEG
 'He cannot go today.'

In some varieties of Burmese, especially in southern Myanmar, the subordinator *ló* is frequently dropped. The negated form is in these varieties *V NEG yá*.

In the second construction, ‘get’ appears in the immediate postverbal position. In this case *yá* ‘get’ is a bound morpheme, that is, it cannot be separated from the main verb by the negator or any other element, and it cannot occur on its own in a short answer. The reading of this construction is normally as obligative ‘must, have to’, especially when connected with the future marker *mɛ*. Examples are given in (xx) and (xx).

(xx) Burmese

mənɛʔ.phyan tɛənɔ yangoun θwà yá mɛ.
 tomorrow 1M PN go get FUT
 ‘I’ll have to go to Yangon tomorrow.’

(xx) Burmese

θu di sa.ʔou? pha? yá mə=là?
 3 this book read get FUT=Q?
 ‘Does he have to read this book?’ (colloquial also ‘can he read this book?’)

The shortest possible answer to (xx) is given in (xxa), with the main verb and the postverbal ‘get’.

(xxa) Burmese

pha? yá mɛ.
 read get FUT
 ‘Yes.’ (lit. ‘has to read’)

The negation of the bound form NEG=V *yá* can have either possibility or obligation reading, depending on the context. A third reading, corresponding closely to the core Southeast Asian negated preverbal ‘get’, is favored in the construction NEG=V *yá θè* ‘not V yet’, which implies a past tense reading and does not necessarily involve possibility or obligation. Example (xx) just states that the event of eating has not yet come about, independent of the reasons, though possibility or obligation are possible readings. In example (xx) with the subordinate construction, only the possibility reading is available.

(xx) Burmese

tɛənɔ thəmìn mə=sà yá θè phù.
 1M cooked.rice NEG=eat get yet NEG
 ‘I haven’t eaten yet.’

(xx) Burmese

tɛənɔ thəmìn sà ló mə=yá θè phù.
 1M cooked.rice eat SUB NEG=get yet NEG
 ‘I cannot eat yet.’

The different construction and different readings of postverbal ‘get’ in Burmese suggest different origins, corresponding to the preverbal and postverbal constructions in the verb-medial core Southeast Asian languages. The Burmese subordinate construction corresponds to the postverbal ‘get’, the Burmese bound morpheme ‘get’ is close in function and form to preverbal ‘get’ in the other languages, which is also bound in the

sense that it cannot occur on its own. The obligative meaning in Burmese is compatible to the core Southeast Asian ‘event caused by prior event’.

Karen

Kayah Li has the full verb *nì* ‘get, come to have’ as in (xx), which is used also as postverbal resultative compound in nuclear serialization as in (xx), and as marker of general possibility (xx). The adverbial function (descriptive complementation) is illustrated in (xx).

- (xx) Kayah Li (Solnit 1997:132)
ʔa nì kāl ʔamē tə-phre rɔ.
 3 get COM wife one-CL PTC
 ‘He got a wife.’

- (xx) Kayah Lin (Solnit 1997:132)
ʔa déhāl nì kāl lū ʔikē du ɔ.
 3 ask get COM 3.OBV blanket big TAG
 ‘He got (by asking) a big blanket from them, huh?’

- (xx) Kayah Li (Solnit 1997:133)
ʔibe nì vā.
 speak get sure
 ‘Sure you can say (it).’

- (xx) Kayah Li (Solnit 1997:133)
ʔa ʔíre nì sō nāl
 3 work get three day
 ‘He worked (as much as) three days.’

Similar patterns are found in Bwe (Henderson 1997 vol. 2:258ff): *ní²* ‘get, obtain’, V *ní²* ‘succeed in doing, manage to do, happen to do’. The situation in other Karen varieties, especially Sgaw and Pwo spoken further away from core Southeast Asia in the Irrawaddy Delta of Myanmar, needs further investigation.

Shan

In Shan, postverbal *lei* ‘get’ denotes a general possibility, as illustrated in examples (xx) to (xx). The preverbal negator *ʔəm* ‘not’ occurs before the main verb or before the postverbal modal, with no obvious difference in meaning. The special negator *pèi* ‘not yet’ is regularly placed before the main verb.

- (xx) Shan (Anisahkan)
neŋ kém.něi ʔəm lei.
 sit here NEG get
 ‘(You) cannot sit here.’

(xx) Shan (*Shan conversation guide for Thai*)
 ʔəm yóm **lei** yêu kha.
 NEG reduce get finish POL
 'I cannot reduce (the price) anymore.'

(xx) Shan (Anisahkan)
 pèi tɛ̃n **lei**.
 not.yet eat get
 '(You) cannot eat yet.'

Preverbal *lei* 'get' is used to express either obligation, in this case usually together with the future marker *tě*, as in (xx) and (xx), or more general an event as result of a prior event, as in (xx). This example is taken from a popular song about the approaching New Year's day, when the people return to their village, one of the rare occasions allowing them to meet their friends and secret lovers.

(xx) Shan (Anisahkan)
 tẽ **lei** kwà.
 FUT get go
 '(I will) have to go.'

(xx) Shan (*Shan conversation guide for Thai*)
 tẽ **lei** khi ká lěŋ kwà ʔ.
 FUT get ride car red go SP
 '(You) have to take the red bus.'

(xx) Shan (from a popular song)
 tẽ **lei** hěŋ khún yêu.
 FUT get see return finish
 'I will soon see you again.'

With the negator *pèi* 'not yet', it denotes negated past/perfect tense, as in (xx).

(xx) Shan (Anisahkan)
 pèi **lei** tɛ̃n.
 not.yet get eat
 '(I) haven't eaten yet.'

The adverbial function of *lei* 'get' as descriptive complementation in Shan is illustrated in (xx) and (xx).

(xx) Shan (Hsihsaing)
 mén yù wéŋ **lei** sǎŋ pǐ yêu.
 3 stay town get two year finish
 'He has been living in town for two years already.'

(xx) Shan (Hsihsaing)

mén phyè lik lei ti-nuŋ.
 3 answer text get ORD-one
 'He got the best grade in the exam.'

Mon

In Mon, *kəʔ* 'get' is used as full lexical verb, as in (xx).

(xx) Mon (WW2nc_mn)
dɛh kəʔ nɛŋ sənət pɔn həkɔʔ.
 3 get CAUS.come gun four CL
 'They got four guns.'

Postverbal functions are 1. resultative verb compound (RVC) indicating the successful completion of an act, and 2. general possibility to carry out an act. The former can be seen as the origin of the latter, which is probably a reanalysis and generalization of the former function. Syntactically there is a difference between the two functions, as the RVC *kəʔ* 'get' occurs between the main verb and the object, as in (xx) and (xx), while the modal follows the verb and object, as in (xx). In (xx), the original meaning 'get' is still present, which is not the case in (xx).

(xx) Mon (WW2nc_mn)
capan rəp kəʔ lə [ʔənkəlɔc] hə-ʔɔt.
 Japanese catch get deposit English ADV-all
 'The Japanese caught them (the British) all.'

(xx) Mon (WW2nc_mn)
laʔ tɔʔ pɔp sɔʔ kəʔ prət, mùə nɔŋ kəʔ hloə mùə kɔt.
 time DIST 1PL sell get banana one bunch get money one ten.thousand
 'Back then we could sell bananas, for one bunch we got 10'000 Kyat.'

(xx) Mon
ŋuə nɔʔ ʔa phèə hùʔ kəʔ.
 day PROX go school NEG get
 'I cannot go to school today.'

Preverbal *kəʔ* 'get' fits Enfield's (2003) definition of 'event as result of prior event', as seen in (xx). The first event, the listeners being quiet, enables the second, the speaker telling a story, which in turn leads to the third event, the listeners listening or being able to listen. In (xx), the causing event or situation is only given as the year 1303 (1941/42).

(xx) Mon (frog_mon01)
məŋ het-het nah, kəʔ ləə kɔ pom, kəʔ kələŋ.
 stay quiet-RED EMPH get tell give story get listen
 'Be quiet now, I'll tell you a story (so you can listen).'

(xx) Mon (WW2nc_mn)
pəəʔ-kləm-pəəʔ kəʔ cɔp pəŋaʔ kɔʔ.dət nɔʔ.

three-hundred-three get arrive PN PN PROX
 'In 1303 they arrived in Panga and Kawdot.'

Negated preverbal *kəʔ* 'get', especially together with postverbal *nɛm* 'yet', regularly gets negated past/perfect reading, as in (xx).

(xx) Mon (WW2nc_mn)
pəəʔ-kləm-pəəʔ dɛh hùʔ kəʔ cao nɛm pùh bɔt dɛh kyaʔ raʔ.
 three-hundred-three 3 NEG get return yet NEG about 3 lose FOC
 'In 1303 they hadn't returned yet, but they had all but lost (the war).'

The adverbial function is illustrated in (xx), where *kəʔ* 'get' introduces the amount of the result reached in the activity described by the main predicate.

(xx) Mon (KM_SR)
kao.mən mən phəə kəʔ mùʔ.ciʔ tan.
 PN stay school get how.may grade
 'Up to what grade did you go to school?'

Unlike in Shan, preverbal 'get' in Mon never expresses an obligation.

Palaung

The full verb use of *bɔ:n* 'get' is illustrated in (xx), where the contextually appropriate translation is 'win'.

(xx) Palaung (Milne 1921:168)
ɬ:n bɔ:n do:et thi: ge:.
 3SG get all bean 3PL
 'He won all their beans.'

There are apparently no postverbal occurrences of *bɔ:n* 'get' in Palaung. In preverbal position it expresses possibility and obligation, depending on the context. Relevant examples from Milne's grammar are given in (xx) to (xx). In (xx), there is no obvious possibility/ability or obligation in the context. The event can here be seen as result of some prior event, as found in the other languages of Southeast Asia.

(xx) Palaung (Milne 1921:76)
ɔ: bɔ:n ɔ: loh.
 1SG get 1SG go
 'I must go.'

(xx) Palaung (Milne 1921:76)
ɬ:n bɔ:n de: it.
 3SG get self sleep
 'He could sleep.'

(xx) Palaung (Milne 1921:156)

Λ:n ka **bɣ:n** de: gwa:i jɔ:m ε:, Λ:n mɣ:h bi: mɣ:ŋ-ko:n.
 3SG NEG get self live follow 1PL 3SG be person land-human
 ‘It cannot stay along with us, it is a human being of the world of men.’

(xx) Palaung (Milne 1921:172)

Λ:n **bɣ:n** di: lɛ:
 3SG get FUT marry
 ‘He will marry her.’

Palaung preverbal *bɣ:n* ‘get’ covers all functions of Burmese postverbal *yá* ‘get’, as well as Shan pre- and postverbal *lei* ‘get’. This may be a case of convergence in the semantics, but not in the syntax of the respective constructions.

Other languages of Myanmar

In Jinghpo “the potential mood is expressed by the verb *lu*, to possess (implying ability to perform)” (Hertz 1902:17). The more common translation of *lu* is ‘get, come to have’, which is used in the glosses here. The examples given by Hertz show *lu* ‘get’ as marker of possibility and obligation, as in (xx) to (xx).

(xx) Jinghpo (adapted from Hertz 1902:17)

ngai kǎlaw **lu** ai.
 1SG do get PRS
 ‘I can do.’

(xx) Jinghpo (adapted from Hertz 1902:17)

ngai kǎlaw **lu** na.
 1SG do get FUT
 ‘I shall be able to do.’

(xx) Jinghpo (adapted from Hertz 1902:17)

nang dai ni rong de sa **lu** na.
 2SG this day court LOC go get FUT
 ‘You must go to the court today.’

A similar situation is found in Turung, a close relative of Jinghpo spoken in Assam (Morey 2010). Here postverbal *lu* ‘get’ is “aspectual, conveying whether the action of that verb is achieved or not” (Morey 2010:403). The verb ‘get’ can also “have the sense of ability, possibility” (Morey 2010:404), in which case it can take the preverbal negator *n-*, as in (xx).

(xx) Turung (Morey 2010:404)

mreyng sang **n-lu**.
 village enter NEG-get
 ‘I could not enter the village (because I did not find time).’

[more data to be added]

3.3 Beyond Myanmar

Modal functions of ‘get’ are also found in languages further apart, such as Kham in Nepal. The meaning here, as seen in examples (xx) and (xx), is given as ‘be permitted’, which makes clear the functional connection with permissive ‘give’. According to the morphological structure of Kham, the main predicate, that is the predicate describing the event that is permitted, occurs in the nominalized form and thus appears as the object of *dai*- ‘get’.

Kham (Watters 2002:334)

(xx) Kham (Watters 2002:334)

ŋa: ba-o ŋa:-dai-ke.

I go-NML 1S-get-PFV

‘I am/was allowed to go.’

(xx) Kham (Watters 2002:334)

ao-lai lã:wo ma-dai-si-i.

this-OBJ take-NML NEG-get-DETRANS-IMPV

‘It’s not permitted to take this.’

The Kham example suggests that the modal function of ‘get’ is indeed related to the permissive causative function of ‘give’, and that these constructions are far more widespread, areally and perhaps within the Tibeto-Burman family, than core Southeast Asia. More data is needed from languages in South Asia and other areas to complete the picture.

[more data to be added]

4. Conclusions

[to be elaborated]

Summary of findings

We have seen in the preceding sections that constructions involving the verbs ‘give’ as causative and ‘get’ as ‘event result of prior event’ are widespread not only in core Southeast Asia, but further to the west in Myanmar and beyond. The areas where the two constructions are used are partly, but not exactly coextensive, with ‘get’ constructions more common in the language of Myanmar than ‘give’ causatives. At least in two documented cases, colloquial (southern) Burmese and Muhse Jinghpo, the ‘give’ causative has been introduced by contact with neighboring languages where the construction is firmly established. In most languages of the area both constructions are semantically and syntactically transparent, facilitating the transfer to other languages in contact situations. Of special interest in this overview are the constructions corresponding to preverbal ‘give’ and ‘get’ in the verb-medial languages of Southeast Asia. In most of the verb-final Tibeto-Burman languages of Myanmar both forms appear in postverbal position, partly merging with the functionally distinct preverbal ‘give’ and

‘get’ in the verb-medial languages. Similar constructions are also found in the languages further south, on the Malay peninsula (Aslian, colloquial Malay) and north of core Southeast Asia, further showing that the phenomena discussed here are more widespread than core Southeast Asia.

Connection between transfer/obtainment of (control over) object with grammatical functions

The conceptual extension of ‘transfer of control over object to recipient’ to ‘transfer of control over situation’ is a small step. This extension explains the permissive/jussive uses of ‘give’, which in some cases have been further expanded to general causative function. Similarly, the verb ‘get’ describes the obtainment of an object or the control/responsibility over an object. In a conceptual extension paralleling the one seen in ‘give’, ‘get’ comes to describe the obtainment of the control or responsibility over a situation. The actual interpretation varies among the languages, ranging from ‘have the opportunity to V’ to ‘have to V’, among others. All functions found in the languages under investigation can be taken as going back to an underlying ‘event as result of prior event’ (Enfield 2003:290ff), with various language-specific extensions or semantic concretizations.

Connection between ‘give’ and ‘get’ constructions

This basic meaning as ‘event result of prior event’ of grammatical ‘get’ suggest a firm connection with the causative uses of ‘give’. Semantically, ‘give’ and ‘get’ can be used to describe the same situation with a change in perspective. If A gives B a book, B gets a book. Similarly, if A lets B eat, B gets to eat (cf. Jenny 2005:223). ‘Get’ describes a caused event with the causing event backgrounded, while ‘give’ describes the caused event with the cause or causing event foregrounded. This parallelism is found in many languages in Southeast Asia and beyond, as in Kham (see sections 2.4 and 3.3 above). The parallelism is evident also syntactically, in some languages more so than in others. The syntactic and semantic transparency of the constructions involved may lead to a felt paradigmatic gap in the languages that have only one (or none) of the two constructions in contact situations with languages which have both constructions, as in the case of Mon and Burmese. This paradigmatic gap, together with the felt conceptual gap (e.g. the lack of permissive as distinct from jussive causative), may eventually lead to the adaptation of the missing construction in the target language.

Micro areas and areal convergence

While Southeast Asia has been established as a linguistic convergence area, many features spread beyond the geographic boundaries of the region. The languages of Myanmar have not received the attention they deserve in most studies on Southeast Asia, and the area between the Salween and Chindwin valleys in fact can be seen as a transitional zone between Southeast and South Asia. Nevertheless, many languages of Myanmar show strong connections with what I call core Southeast Asia. Not much is known about how the Southeast Asian convergence area came about, or how what today

is Myanmar fits in the picture, but a number of documented small scale contact scenarios, such as Shan and Jinghpo in Muhse, suggest that the spread of features went through a chain of contact situations, at least as one possibility. The case of the replication of preverbal 'give' in colloquial Burmese, which spread from southern Myanmar up to many areas also in upper Myanmar and found its way into the written language at least in the modern colloquial style, shows that it is not always the politically or economically dominant language that is the source of contact induced change. Low-prestige Mon is the most likely source of the Burmese construction, with L2 speakers of Burmese innovating and initiating the propagation, which was then taken over by L1 speakers of Burmese.

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